

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(83) 46 final

Brussels, 7 February 1983

Proposal for a
COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC)

determining the Community scale for grading of pig carcasses

(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

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Explanatory memorandum

The Community scale for the classification of pig carcasses is provided for in Article 4 of Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75 on the common organization of the market in pigmeat, with a view to establishing comparable price quotations for pig carcasses in the Community.

There has now been more than 15 years' practical experience of applying this Community classification scale, i.e. since Regulation No 211/67/EEC, (EEC) No 2108/70 and (EEC) No 2760/75 came into force. Common to the three Regulations is that, in assessing the market value of pig carcasses, objective criteria (weight and back fat thickness) and subjective criteria (conformation) are combined, the aim being always to assess the lean meat content by reference to factors which can be ascertained by measurement or inspection of the exterior of the half-carcase. Subsequent to the accession of three new Member States in 1973, the Community scale for the classification of pig carcasses was extended by Regulation (EEC) No 2507/74 to permit direct assessment of the lean meat content using specialized measuring instruments.

As the methods for assessing lean meat content using instruments have since been improved and conventional methods for assessing the value of carcasses have often produced little satisfactory results, it is proposed that the combined assessment method based on objective and subjective criteria should be abandoned and that in future only classification methods based solely on objective and reproducible measurements should be adopted.

In order to implement this new procedure for classifying pig carcasses, the proposed Regulation is scheduled to come into force on 1 January 1984, with a four-year transitional period so that the European pigmeat industry will have a reasonable length of time in which ^{to} adjust to the new situation.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75 of 29 October 1975 on the common organization of the market in pigmeat¹, as last amended by Regulation (EEC) No 2966/80², and in particular Articles 2 and 4(5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Whereas, before 1 August of each year, a basic price must be fixed for pig carcasses of a standard quality defined by reference to a Community scale for grading pig carcasses;

Whereas it is therefore necessary to lay down rules ensuring uniform grading of pig carcasses, particularly in order to guarantee fair payment to producers based on the quality of the pigs they have delivered to slaughterhouses; whereas this grading is also intended to make the market more transparent as regards trade in pig carcasses;

Whereas the value of a pig carcass is determined in particular by its lean meat content; whereas assessment of the lean meat content on the basis of an objective consideration of the weight of the carcass and the thickness of the back fat, together with a subjective assessment of muscle development in the principal parts of the carcass can provide a correct assessment of this value; whereas, however, the subjective element represented by the assessment of muscle development can also lead to wide variations in results; whereas, therefore, partly subjective assessment methods should be replaced by methods based solely on the objective measurement of one or more anatomic parts of the pig carcass;

.../...

¹ OJ No L 282, 1.11.1975, p. 1

² OJ No L 307, 18.11.1980, p. 5

Whereas the presentation of the carcass, the weight and the concept of lean meat percentage need to be precisely defined if the assessment results are to be comparable;

Whereas, given the differences in pig production in the Community, pig carcasses should be divided into seven marketing classes according to their lean meat content, each, except the two extreme classes, covering a range of 5 % of lean meat; whereas Member States should nonetheless be given the opportunity to disregard the two extreme classes;

Whereas a monitoring system should be established to ensure that the methods for assessing the percentage of lean meat are correctly applied; whereas, in addition, market transparency should be improved by requiring carcasses to be marked according to their lean meat content;

Whereas, to make it possible to establish quotations for pig carcasses on a common basis and to make these quotations comparable to the basic price valid for the standard quality, the Community scale should be used for establishing quotations for pig carcasses and in particular for determining the average price for pig carcasses referred to in Article 4 of Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75;

Whereas, since this Regulation provides for substantial alterations to the grading of pig carcasses, all the provisions on the subject should be assembled in a new regulation and Council Regulation (EEC) No 2760/75 of 1 November 1975 determining the Community scale for grading pig carcasses³ should accordingly be repealed,

³ OJ No L 282, 1.11.1975, p. 10

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

This Regulation lays down the Community scale for grading carcasses of pigs other than those which have been used for breeding.

Article 2

1. For the purposes of this Regulation, "pig carcase" shall mean the body of a slaughtered pig, bled and eviscerated, whole or divided down the mid-line, without tongue, bristles, hooves and genital organs, but with flare fat, kidneys and diaphragm.

If normal commercial practice in a Member State differs from the standard presentation defined above, the Member State may be authorized to allow a different presentation of the pig carcase.

2. For the purposes of this Regulation, the weight recorded shall apply to the cold carcase presented as described in the first subparagraph of paragraph 1.

The weight of the carcase shall be determined not more than forty-five minutes after the pig has been stuck. Since weighing takes place while the carcase is warm, the result obtained shall be converted into the equivalent weight for the cold carcase by means of a coefficient.

If the forty-five minute period is exceeded, the coefficient for conversion into cold carcase weight shall be adjusted accordingly.

3. For the purposes of this Regulation, the lean meat content of a pig carcase shall be the relationship between the weight of the carcase presented as described in the first subparagraph of paragraph 1 and the total weight of the red striated muscles from all parts of the carcase, as far as separable by knife, obtainable by total dissection of the carcase.

The lean meat content shall be assessed by means of authorized grading methods. Only statistically-proved assessment methods based on physical measurement of one or more anatomic parts of the pig carcase shall be regarded as authorized grading methods.

.../...

4. Approval of the grading methods shall be subject to compliance with a maximum figure for statistical error in assessment.

Article 3

1. The pig carcasses shall be weighed and graded according to the estimated lean meat content.
2. The following grading scale shall be applied:

<u>lean meat as % of carcase weight</u>	<u>Class</u>
60 or more	L
55 or more but less than 60	E
50 or more but less than 55	A
45 or more but less than 50	N
40 or more but less than 45	P
35 or more but less than 40	I
less than 35	G

3. Having regard to the characteristics of their pigmeat production, Member States may be authorized to disregard the highest or the lowest lean meat class and to grade carcasses belonging to those classes in the nearest remaining class.

Article 4

1. Carcasses shall be graded at the time of weighing.
2. Graded carcasses shall be ~~marked~~ with letter for the class indicating the estimated lean meat content.
3. Operators may apply smaller lean meat percentage divisions than those given in Article 3(2), provided that the limits of the new divisions coincide with the class limits given in that Article. Operators may accordingly indicate the lean meat percentages in more detail on condition that the marking still enables the carcasses to be assigned to the classes given in Article 3(2). However, in all trade in uncut carcasses it shall be obligatory to indicate the classes as provided for in Article 3(2).

.../...

4. Without prejudice to the second subparagraph of Article 2(1), no fat-, muscle- or other tissue may be removed from the carcase before weighing, grading and marking.

Article 5

1. General rules concerning:

- the coefficients for converting different presentations into the standard carcase presentation,
- the coefficients for converting warm carcase weight into cold carcase weight,
- the authorization of grading methods, and
- the marking of pig carcasses

shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 24 of Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75.

2. The measures necessary to ensure uniform application of the Community grading scale may be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 24 of Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75.

3. The authorization referred to in Article 3(3) shall be granted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 24 of Regulation (EEC) No 2759/75.

Article 6

This Regulation shall enter into force on 1 January 1984.

For the period from 1 January 1984 to 31 December 1987, operators shall apply either the Community grading scale provided for in this Regulation or the scale provided for in Regulation (EEC) No 2760/75.

Regulation (EEC) No 2760/75 is hereby repealed with effect from 1 January 1988.

Done at

For the Council